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FAVORITE MUSIC ARTIST / GROUP: Justin Bieber

HIDDEN TALENT: I can touch my tongue to my nose

IF YOU HAD UNLIMITED MONEY, WHAT WOULD YOU DO?:

Save all the dogs

WHAT IS YOUR ESTABLISHMENT KNOWN FOR?:

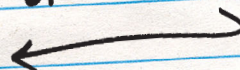
The awesome games

CRAZIEST THING YOU'VE SEEN FROM BEHIND THE BAR?:

20 person fight in the dining room. Chairs were being thrown, lights hanging from the ceiling were ripped down and used to hit people.

SAGE BARTENDER ADVICE: Keep your head on a swivel

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OF THE WEEK



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Our criminal justice system is broken. Can a sandwich shop that employs the formerly incarcerated help fix it? *by Emily Cassel*

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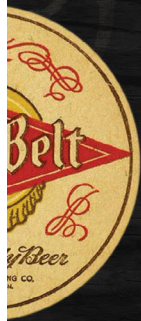
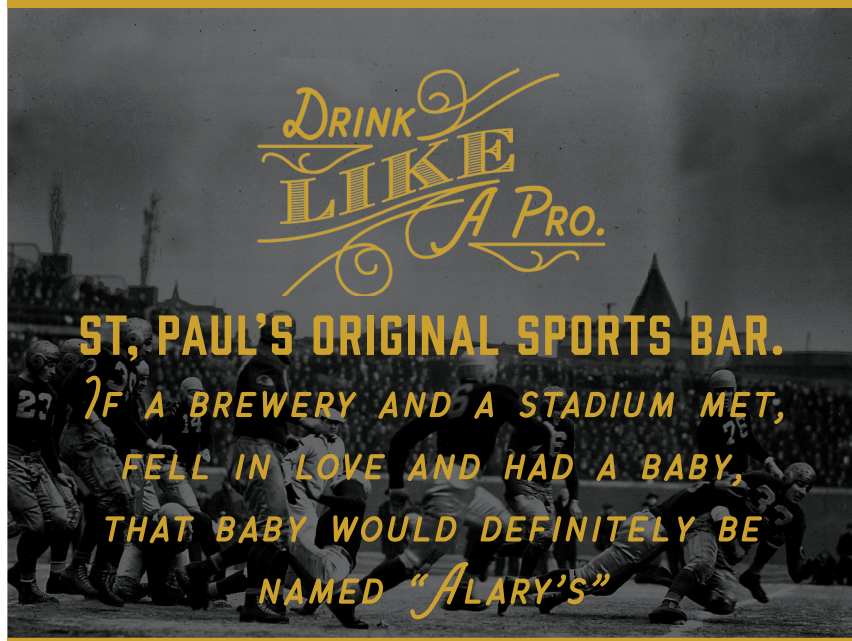


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THE SHORTLIST



See the tats, flame eating, and body suspension of the Minneapolis Tattoo Arts Convention at citypages.com

BUMP OPERA

THE STAT SHEET

27%

Minneapolis' decline in crime incidents in December, the third month of decline in a row

1,000

Number of federal workers in Minnesota who've applied for unemployment due to the shutdown

9.4%

The retail vacancy rate in the Twin Cities, the highest since 2010

\$3 million

Welfare offered by Roseville to lure Colder Products from St. Paul

"Comcast: 'Hey, watch us suck!' Frontier: 'Hold my beer.'"

Reader Anne-Marie Hoskinson responds to "Is there a cable company worse than Comcast? Meet Frontier," at citypages.com.

WOMEN RISING

AMID THE DEPRAVITY AND DESPAIR of American politics, good news is here: There are now a record 102 women serving in the U.S. House, the highest number in history.

Nearly 60 percent of Americans now believe there are too few women in Congress. Since men have spectacularly sucked at the job, one might expect that figure to be higher. But there's nonetheless been a radical shift of opinion over the past decade, when the female surge began.

Unfortunately, men still cling to the ways of yore: Only 30 percent believe women could better run the government, despite all evidence to the contrary.

POPULAR STORIES

AT CITYPAGES.COM

In the Heart of the Beast to host its **FINAL MAYDAY PARADE** this spring

Poll: **IS UPTOWN MINNEAPOLIS DEAD?**

Hundreds use the **TWIN CITIES LIGHT RAIL** for shelter each night—these officials stayed up to meet them

NORTH FACE, COLUMBIA stores to close in Uptown

Report says Minnesotans should **HEAD NORTH TO RETIRE.** But should they?

WOMEN'S EQUALITY

Minnesota's women march toward (relative) prosperity

In an ideal world, you could meet a random straight couple on the street, and there would be a 50-50 chance that the woman would be the breadwinner.

We do not live in that ideal world. According to U.S. Census Bureau data from 2017, women still make about 71 percent of the take of their male counterparts. In fact, in the nation's 50 largest metro areas, women were the main breadwinners in less than 31 percent of couples' households.

But there's a silver lining. Minneapolis ranked second for cities that come closest to that ideal 50 percent. Here, the rate of female breadwinners is 31.2 percent—just 0.1 percent behind the top spot, which was snagged by Hartford. We're followed closely by Columbus, Providence, and Baltimore, which hover between 30 and 31 percent.

At the very bottom we have Salt Lake City, where fewer than a quarter of couples include a woman who earns more than her partner.

Minneapolis' biggest boost comes from a fairly low unemployment rate among women. They make up 51 percent of our state's workforce. They also compose 32 percent of Minnesota's business owners, and 41 percent of our managers.

Add in the state's pregnancy and parental protection laws—entitling them to 12 weeks of parental leave—and it adds up to a (relatively) woman-friendly workplace.

But before you get too excited, we also have our drawbacks. According to the Census Bureau, we still have nearly a 20 percent gender wage gap. The median hourly wage for a Minnesota woman was \$16.75, compared to that of a Minnesota man: \$20.



UNSPLASH

So why do women make so much less than men? One of the more popular theories has been that women simply choose industries that don't pay as much or don't require as high an education level (the health care and social assistance industries employ about a quarter of Minnesota women).

But the wage gap persists across industries and educational attainment. Men still routinely earn more in those industries, whether they have a doctorate or an associate degree.

The takeaway: Minneapolis is doing pretty good... as long as the equal pay bar remains low. —HANNAH JONES

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Bragging Wrongs

Why are people lining up for limited-edition beers?

Mark Stutrud's among the most successful beer brewers in Minnesota history. He has a little advice for anyone who wants to get into his industry: Don't.

Stutrud, a lot of the brains (and some of the brawn) behind Summit Brewing, says he wouldn't try starting a brewery now. The market's too saturated, too many clueless punks are spoiling beer's reputation, and people's palates aren't developed.

Mark blames his competitors, who cave in to consumer demand for beer that tastes like cupcakes and juice. He thinks beer should taste like beer. And if you want to become a brewer, first learn the basics, then go crazy. Others disagree.

He fingers "special release" and "experimental" brews, which stray so far from beer's mores that Stutrud's not even sure they should be called beer anymore. These new beers are more like candy—or a junkie's hook, with everyone raising the stakes in sugar, alcohol, and weirdness just to keep their addicts hyped.

He knows that this take is not well-received, but he stands by his principles. Stutrud learned his craft at the knee of brewers who followed recipes and techniques passed down through millennia. Monks who've been dead 1,000 years would recognize the beer he makes. The big and beautiful copper tanks at his St. Paul facility were custom-made. His 80-some employees put a lot of thought into their work.

That's why he's ready to pick a fight. Stutrud's told some young brewers they

don't know what they're doing, and that the risks they take with new flavors and techniques aren't cool or exciting. They're stupid, and only subtract from the generations-long work he and many others have put in.

By the time a beer hits a Summit tap, or is hauled into your liquor store, Stutrud and his master tasters have sampled it many times over, confident of its perfection. He's much less sure of a 25-year-old

Monks who've been dead 1,000 years would recognize the beer he makes.

rookie combining "exotic" ingredients, producing a limited edition, and then waiting for customers to stand in a line as if they're hoping to buy a high-priced purse or the newest Jordan sneaker.

Being able to be among the rare few who try it may seem exciting and cool, but Stutrud doesn't get it.

"That kinda shit pissed me off," Stutrud says, shaking his silvery locks. And here's the weird thing: The brewers he's dissing... don't necessarily disagree with him.

Brewers who put out the kind of one-off "stunt" beers Stutrud abhors say they're not sure why consumers are willing to wait in line for the chance to spend money on a beer they've never had before. But

they're meeting the consumer where they are, and exclusivity, the chance to geek out and brag about having a beer no one else can get, is a small but significant part of driving demand.

Dan Wellendorf of Modist Brewing says brewers are into invention, learning through experimentation. (The brand name is literally a take on the term "modification.")

Messing with tradition is what they're all about, and if you want one of the three mainstay beers they always have running, you're welcome to try them. If you want one of their special releases, there might be competition.

"The releases are an important part of what we do," Wellendorf says. "Any time you see people lined up outside the door... I mean, it's pretty badass to be sought-after."

Wellendorf doesn't often line up for rare beer himself. Neither does Fair State's Niko Tonks, though he says messing around with new styles has done them well: The "roselle" beer, a sweet, fruity offering, got its start as a limited-run experiment. Now it's 25 percent of Fair State's sales.

Shakopee Brew Hall's Ben Sallyard and Utepils' Eric Harper won't stand in line either, but know some customers want to. It's called the "fear of missing out" ("FOMO" for short), and it drives people to stand in line for the unique privilege of... buying a growler of beer. You'll spend more time waiting in line than you will drinking the beer in question, but at least you'll have a story to tell.

"There's more to it than just saying you got the beer," Harper says. "Think about



Mike Mullen

Black Friday. You could buy that TV tomorrow too. Human beings are just like that."

Sallyard considers Summit's Mark Stutrud a "grandfather of the current craft brewing scene," and respects his opinion. But he also knows some of his customers want to feel like they're on the cutting edge. And he's going to keep inventing new and heretofore-unseen beers, if that's what people want.

"From a brewing perspective, it's the stuff that moves quickly that puts you in the black."

There's nothing wrong with that. But Mark Stutrud points out that Todd Haug, who created all the Surly beers that set the local beer scene alight, learned his craft at Summit before breaking off and reinventing Twin Cities beer. Haug learned the rules before he broke them.

Stutrud says when hot-shit brewers from around the country come to his hall, they typically want Summit's Keller Pils, a simple beer made masterfully, with an obsession to detail. It's a traditional brew and goes down smoothly. You could drink it all night and not get into trouble, and with few regrets.

Says Stutrud, "That's the point."

mmullen@citypages.com

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THE LEADERSHIP:
(L-R) Tommy Franklin,
Emily Hunt Turner,
Heather Olsen,
Roslynn Pedracine,
Tommy Harris,
Sara Stamschror-Lott.
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Were you picturing a tiny south Minneapolis grilled cheese shop?

Guilt-Free FOOD

Our criminal justice system is broken. Can a sandwich shop that employs the formerly incarcerated help fix it?



COURTESY OF ALL SQUARE, FAR RIGHT PHOTO BY UNDENIABLY DAIRY

Late last year, a cozy neighborhood spot opened on the corner of 41st Street and Minnehaha Avenue. Each afternoon, the sun-filled room hums with the chatter of young families and tapping of laptop keys; at night, neon lights give it a calm, electric glow. Goopy sandwiches sizzle on the griddle behind the bar before they're nestled next to small piles of greens and fries. Everything smells like cheese and butter.

It's clichéd to say that a restaurant "looks at first like any other" before diving into whatever minutiae sets it ever so slightly apart from its contemporaries. But here, that distinction is important. Because the sandwich shop does operate differently than any other restaurant in Minnesota and just about any in the country: One hundred percent of its employees have been to prison.

This is All Square, the brainchild of Emily Hunt Turner, a civil rights attorney who spent most of her career working in prisoner reentry and fair housing with the Department of Housing & Urban Development.

It's a job that sounds rewarding, which belies the slow and often futile work. In her time with the department, she saw up-close the myriad ways in which the system fails people who have served time. It's legal, for example, to deny housing to those who've been incarcerated—even government-subsidized public housing. She describes her work there as an exercise in extended frustration and "being pissed at HUD."

It's not just finding a place to live, either. Universities and employers are allowed to ask applicants if they've been convicted of a felony. Drug and alcohol treatment, job training, and mental health services are difficult to track down and tough to afford once you do. You'll find an undercurrent of prejudice in almost every facet of reentry, a sneering disdain attached to

terms like "ex-con." All that contributes to the United States' high recidivism rates.

"People have gone to prison, done their shit, and they're being punished as much as 41 years later," Hunt Turner says, referring to one case she worked on while she was with the department.

Those years with HUD made her angry. They also got her thinking about alternate ways to shift the system. Maybe Emily Hunt Turner the government employee couldn't help people find stable housing, or apply to college, or convince an employer to hire them. But could a business meet needs the government wasn't? Could a restaurant?

After years of planning, organizing, and fundraising, All Square opened in September.

The nonprofit restaurant is a "civil rights social enterprise," and if that sounds like a lot of words for "sandwich shop," that's

(cheddar, jalapeños, Sriracha ranch, Chili Cheese Fritos) and the Jerk Chicken (rotisserie chicken, Swiss, provolone, guava jam, Jamaican jerk sauce).

They're there on Mondays, too, though the griddles stay cool while everyone heads into the space next door for that week's All Square Institute.

This is the part most lunchtime guests don't see, and it's the thing that sets the restaurant apart. Designed to accommodate 10 to 14 justice-impacted persons—"fellows"—at a time, it offers two main tracks: entrepreneurship and law. They've assembled a team of experts and guests to help lead classes, and partners include the Brennan Center for Justice, Hamline Law School, and Yale Law.

Fellows leave the yearlong program with a six-month post-graduation plan, plus a

"People have gone to prison,
done their shit, and they're being
punished as much as 41 years later."

because it does more than just supply people with jobs and meals.

"A paycheck, a guarantee that you can work X amount of hours a week—it's a good start," says restaurant and creative director Tommy Franklin.

"We're not just out to reduce recidivism," Hunt Turner adds. "We're not just out to provide minimum-wage jobs. We want to generate leaders. That's who we are and what we do."

All Square's 12 once-incarcerated employees—the restaurant uses the term "justice impacted"—are there Tuesday through Friday. From 11 in the morning until 9 at night, they serve up sweet and savory creations like the Punch 'n Crunch

résumé, references, and a network that's there to help them if they need support in the future.

"Everything under our mission of providing paychecks, power, and pipelines to prosperity," says program director Tommy Harris. "Whatever that means to you."

There are a few similar operations: In Cleveland, Edwins Leadership & Restaurant employs the formerly incarcerated and provides access to housing, legal services, and literacy programs. But Edwins deals in French fine dining; it's \$40 plates and white tablecloths, not \$7 sandwiches and draft beer. It also sticks to culinary and hospitality skills, while All Square focuses on entrepreneurship more broadly.

Personal development is integral too, from lessons on making a budget and building wealth to mental health and wellness services. The institute has two therapists on hand, and all of this year's fellows have opted to participate in both weekly one-on-one meetings and a restorative circle with leadership and fellows.

The name "All Square" is a play on the sandwich shape and the idea that folks who serve their time are supposed to be "square" in the eyes of the law. You don't need to have restaurant experience to apply. You aren't expected to specify your career goals when you interview. The institute ensures its fellows have transportation and business attire, and everyone is issued a company phone.

What graduates do with their institute training is entirely up to them. Some will go to law school; one entrepreneur plans to open a mobile beauty business.

And yes, a few fellows in the inaugural institute plan to put their grilled cheese-flipping experience into practice with food trucks or restaurants of their own. You can see their handiwork as new sandwiches appear on the menu. One recent addition, a Mediterranean-style sammy with cucumbers, hummus, and thyme-infused butter, boasts a name worthy of a spot on the Bob's Burgers specials board: Did My Thyme.

There are nods like that to the All Square ethos all over the restaurant, though at first, founders weren't sure to what extent there should be. It takes serious strength of character to be so forthcoming about your past, and to be employed by a restaurant where every shift is an intrinsic reminder of it.

"It's a big fuckin' deal to ask someone to work in a place that, like, puts them on blast, and we do not take that lightly at all," Hunt Turner says. "We're going to be very

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CAYLON HACKWITH

real and very honest about who we are and what we do, but we knew that what would come with that would be: Everybody who comes in here knows everybody who works here has a record.”

The mission isn’t keeping any diners away—or if it is, those people aren’t missed. All Square raised \$60,000 through Kickstarter to get off the ground in 2016, and the Minneapolis Foundation awarded them with a \$50,000 grant to fund general operations in late 2017. An ongoing GiveMN campaign has brought in another \$106,000. Just this November, Wisconsin’s Crystal Farms donated a year’s worth of cheese and butter to the cause.

It’s an ethos that’s resonating with the neighborhood, too. Harris says they’re “blowing revenue projections out of the water.” (“There are some people that come here six days a week—there’s one person I’m a little nervous for,” Franklin adds, chuckling.) Just before the holidays, someone tacked on a \$500 tip with their bill.

“These guys are getting tipped so well,” Hunt Turner says. “Let’s be real, that is kind of badass. People are coming in and intentionally investing in you and tipping you. Let’s celebrate that... that’s a big fucking deal.”

Speaking of big fucking deals: If you can’t consider it one already on account of its pint-sized footprint, All Square is poised to reach that level soon. In December, the viral Facebook video makers at Now/This shared its story in a three-minute clip that has nearly 528,000 views, and more and more news outlets outside Minnesota are catching on. Fast Company wrote about the mission shortly after the grand opening—“Every employee at this grilled cheese restaurant has a criminal record”—while Delta’s inflight magazine gave them a hat tip in a recent “new and noteworthy” section. There was a Thought Catalog profile. Even Oprah shouted out the mission-based eatery on her “Super Soul Conversations” podcast. (No, they haven’t met O herself... yet.)

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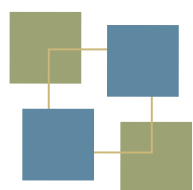
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As seen at the **MINNESOTA STATE FAIR**

There's been plenty of national praise for the building itself, too. Created by award-winning architects Jonathan Louie and Nicole McIntosh, the eye-catching neon-accented space is the opposite of a gray-and-white prison cafeteria. At night, it makes its little corner radiate like something out of *Blade Runner*, a design that's looking toward the future like the employees inside. "This Glowing Grilled Cheese Restaurant Offers the Formerly Incarcerated a Fresh Start," the NYC-based architecture and design magazine *Metropolis* cooed earlier this month, and they were only the latest to profile the eatery, after the Architect's Paper and Architectural Digest.

Not bad for a shop selling \$6-\$8 sandwiches.

"We've seen incredible growth overall from where we started until now," Harris says. They've already expanded, taking over the building next door where the institute's classes are held. Eventually, Franklin would like to see that address used for even more: a space for youth or members of the community to come together or host events.

And their plans don't stop with Minneapolis. "We wouldn't call it a social enterprise if we didn't intend to scale," Hunt Turner says.

Growth isn't what drives them, but one of their long-term goals is to transform the narrative around having a criminal record. "One way to do that is to scale our business model and our brand," Hunt Turner says. There have already been a few requests to bring the concept elsewhere, and they've talked about replicating All Square's original model in Fargo, or New Orleans, or as near as Hunt Turner's hometown, St. Paul.

For now, though, they're focusing on making the institute as valuable to fellows as it can be. All of this is new—for Minnesota, for the country, and for the folks serving sandwiches and giving lectures at All Square every day. The first group of fellows aren't yet halfway through the program.

"Obviously, changing the system from within... it's going to take several years," says Franklin. "Not two, not three, not five. Sometimes 10 or 20.

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But to be just a little tiny solution in this little pocket of Minneapolis, to begin with—it seems like a small piece, but it's

a tremendous challenge. And a tremendous responsibility and honor to get buy-in and trust from the community."

"It's a trial every single day," Hunt Turner says. "I would never sugarcoat just how difficult it is for us to continue to work out all these things.

"I'm crazy excited to see where it goes," she adds. "That's way more purpose than I was ever able to extract as a housing lawyer."

In the meantime, they'll make you a mean grilled cheese. **GF**

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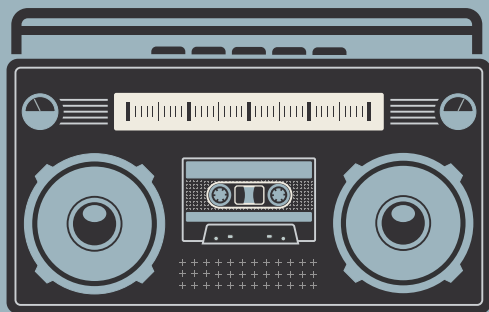
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LAUREN HAUN

MY TRIP TO AN EDINA OFFICE PARK TO FIND THIS DREAMY JAPANESE FRIED CHICKEN SANDWICH

The familiar *boop* of the map app chimes as I pull into a massive Edina parking lot flanked by two towering office buildings. I have arrived.

Or... have I? I see a sign for Dairy Queen's corporate headquarters, and my confusion doubles (while visions of hot fudge sundaes dance in my head).

This is not the place I'd expect to find a beloved Japanese restaurant. But as I navigate toward the back of the lot, I see a sign for JK's Table pop out among the rows of gray windows.

JK's Table was enthusiastically recommended by a friend after I pleaded for new places to eat. A quick cruise of their online menu had one item practically shouting "Eat me" through the screen: Japanese Style Spicy Fried Chicken Sandwich.

I'm full of purpose when I stroll through those doors at lunchtime. I order the spicy chicken sandwich in question, two pieces of sushi, a cup of green tea, and, heeey, why not, some takoyaki as well.

I sit, and soon a small flowered teapot and a mug appear on a plastic tray in front of me. In a few minutes the fried chicken sandwich arrives, sushi on the side.

The sandwich is filled with crispy chicken chunks coated in a sweet brown sauce, pickled carrots stuffed in for some sour, and shaved cabbage for crunch. The potato hoagie roll was slathered with mayo. Although this sandwich had multiple sauces, it never veered into sloppy mess territory. The bun was soft and mild, exactly what you want for a sandwich with a lot of flavors.

And this was all comfort flavors, a soft fleece blanket for the soul. I didn't detect

any kick—it definitely falls within the range of Minnesota Mild—and plucked a few pieces of pickled ginger from the sushi plate to add to the last few bites, which made it perfect.

The two pieces of sushi went down quick, the tuna tender and smooth, the salmon eggs squishing onto my tongue with a deep ocean sweetness. Another sip of green tea and the takoyaki arrive, with a warning from the server that they're very hot and I should wait. Takoyaki are golden, toasted spheres created with an egg batter. Similar in texture to a fluffy Dutch baby pancake, they come stuffed with chunks of octopus, green onions, and other assorted fillings.

After a few minutes of poking the takoyaki with the tip of a chopstick, I finally dive in. They're filled with a soft, eggy custard and bits of octopus that are pleasant to chew. The brown sauce on top adds a bit of sweetness, but the standard pile of bonito flakes is nowhere to be found. The dried, fermented, and smoked bonito fish add a deep rich flavor and were missed here, but at \$3.50, the dish was a lovely side piece to the rest of my lunch.

I've worked in my fair share of offices, and can attest that one of the few things that makes cube life bearable is a quality lunch spot within walking distance. I still hold a special place in my heart for all Minneapolis' lunchtime delights that sustained me through stacks of invoices, customer calls, and assorted corporate nonsense.

JK's Table is homey and warm in contrast to the bleak concrete building that contains it. They offer comfort food to those putting in their time dressed in business casual, and would be a lovely excursion if you find yourself deep in Edina on a weekday morning or afternoon.

(Just tell your boss: "dentist appointment.") —LAUREN HAUN



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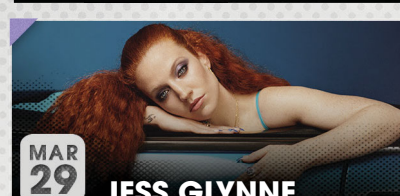
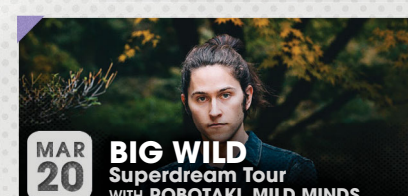
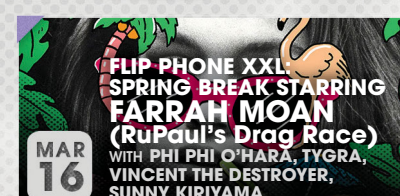
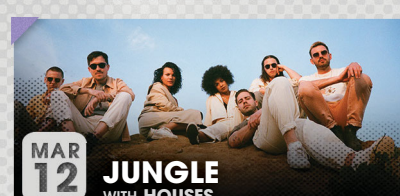
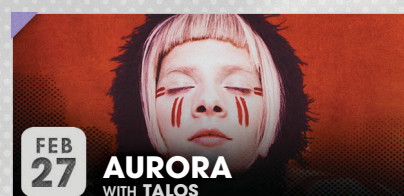
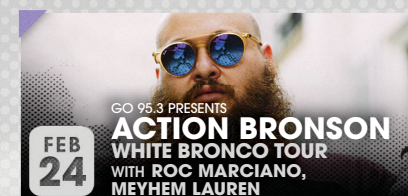
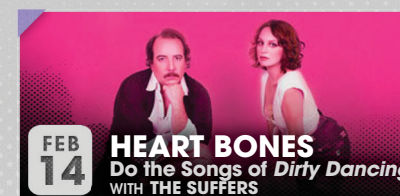
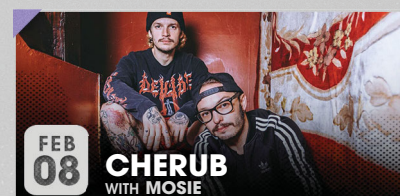
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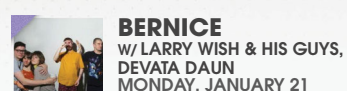
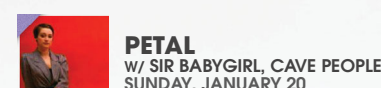
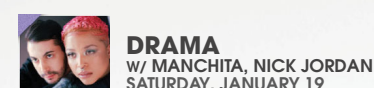
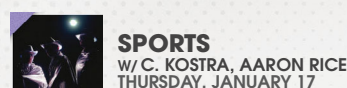
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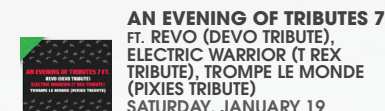
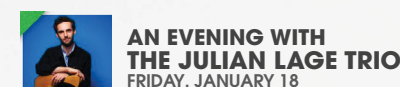
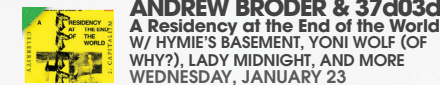
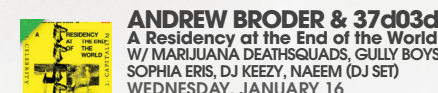


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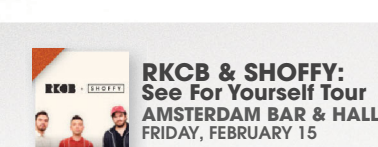
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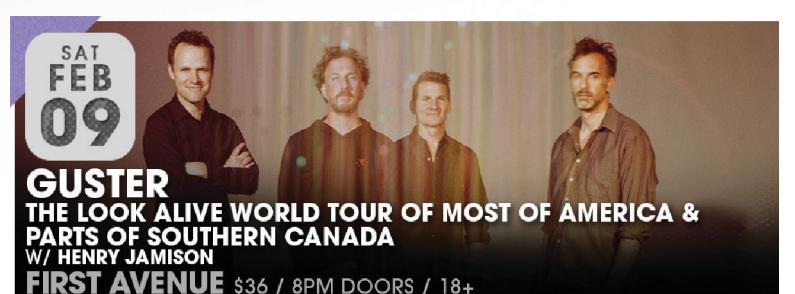
AROUND TOWN



JUST ANNOUNCED



COMING SOON



A LIST

FRIDAY Pole Dance Festival returns p. 21

SATURDAY Sour beers at Casanova p. 22

SUNDAY Ski jumpers compete p. 23



The work of Twin Cities renaissance man Ta-coumba Aiken is at Aloft.

TA-COUMBA AIKEN, SAY WHAT

WEDNESDAY 1.16

COMEDY

KERMET APIO

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"I don't really do much political stuff," says comedian Kismet Apio, "but in a club I will do some stuff that I wouldn't do at a corporate event or on a cruise ship." Apio is definitely a fan of political humor, but he also knows his audience. "This guy came up to me after a show and said, 'You're funnier than Stephen Colbert.' I knew what he was saying.

He was very conservative, but he's not [politically] right at all. There's no way some goofy Hawaiian road comic is funnier than what Stephen Colbert is doing right now, but that's where we are at this point: 'He's making fun of the guy I support, so he's not funny.'" Times certainly have changed. "When Chevy Chase was falling all over the place as Gerald Ford or Dan Aykroyd was doing an impression of Jimmy Carter, it was more about speaking comedy to power. That's a big tenet of comedy." Apio is more likely to talk about his family, personal experiences, and his Hawaiian

upbringing. "A guy asked me, 'How long have you lived in the states?' You mean other than the one I was born in?" 18+. 8 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday; 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. \$15-\$18. 708 N. First St., Minneapolis; 612-338-6393. **Through Saturday —P.F. WILSON**

BARHOPPING

WOMEN ONLY PINBALL TOURNAMENT

TILT PINBALL BAR

Pinball is back in a major way, especially in the Twin Cities. Sisyphus

Brewing's collection of machines continues to grow, Caffetto Cafe's six-machine basement is a secret gem, and the pinball machines at Up/Down are often as coveted as the arcade games. But like any rising trend in geek culture, the scene isn't always lady-friendly. It will be, however, at Tilt's Women Only Pinball Tournament. This Wednesday, pinball enthusiasts will gather to talk about the local scene, give each other tips, play against each other, and drink from the bar. No experience is necessary, so don't worry if your flipper skills are a little rusty. Folks will compete against each other in groups of four until the final two vie for top points and bragging rights. This is the first in what event organizers hope will be a monthly event. 7 to 10 p.m. Free. 113 E. 26th St., Suite 110, Minneapolis; 612-236-4089. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

THURSDAY 1.17

ART/GALLERY

TA-COUMBA AIKEN

ALOFT MINNEAPOLIS

Hotel art exhibitions that are curated to introduce local artists to visitors have been happening around the Twin Cities for a while now. Kolman & Pryor Gallery has the inside track at the Hewing Hotel, where it shows its own artists. Gallery 13 has been doing small shows at Aloft Hotel, and is now deepening that engagement with an exhibit by one of our most eminent painters: Ta-coumba Aiken. In addition to his long history as an arts administrator, public artist, educator, and activist, Aiken is well known for his lively, musical artworks on canvas and paper. Think jazz: pattern, repetition, improvisation in a continuous stream of innovation and revolution. It's time more non-locals know about Aiken and his work. The opening reception runs from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Thursday, January 17, and there will be a artist's talk on Saturday, January 26, at 2:30 p.m. Free. 900 S. Washington Ave., Minneapolis; 612-455-8400. —CAMILLE LEFEVRE

Rose Tyler
twists and
turns at
last year's
festival.



ALYSSA KRISTINE PHOTOGRAPHY

ART/PARTY

THIRD THURSDAY: EXPLORATION WITH STUDIO/E

MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ART

This installation of Third Thursday is all about exploration, both intellectual and physical, as you make your way through Mia's galleries with travel and adventure in mind. You'll also meet a variety of explorers at a panel talk featuring polar explorer Tyler Fish; Liwanag Ojala, CEO of CaringBridge; Todd Waterbury, chief creative officer at Target; and hip-hop poet Dessa. Drinks, live music, and hands-on activities round out the evening. 6 to 9 p.m. Free. 2400 S. Third Ave., Minneapolis; 612-870-3000. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

COMEDY

ELEANOR KERRIGAN

RICK BRONSON'S HOUSE OF COMEDY

Like many comics, Eleanor Kerrigan started out working in a comedy club—but not as performer. She waitressed at the Comedy Store in Los Angeles while pursuing an acting career. But she was naturally funny, and, at the behest of Andrew Dice Clay, she gave standup a shot. Before long, she was out on the road featuring for the Diceman. Onstage she talks a lot about her upbringing in south Philadelphia with nine siblings. "I was always hanging out with my brothers," she tells an

audience. "I didn't know I was a girl until a week ago. Mostly because I'm still waiting to develop." Her parents split up when she was nine years old, but she remained close with her father, which surprises a lot of people. "He left your mom with 10 kids,' they say to me." She explains, though, "We grew up in a row home. When he left I thought, 'This is great, we need the room!' I finally got a whole drawer." 7:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday; 9:45 p.m. Friday; 7 p.m. Saturday and Sunday; 9:30 p.m. Saturday. 408 E. Broadway, Mall of America, Bloomington; 952-858-8558. **Through Sunday —P.F. WILSON**

FRIDAY 1.18

FESTIVAL/SPORTS

POLE DANCE FESTIVAL

MIDPOINTE EVENT CENTER

As our State Fair motto goes, the summer is for all things on a stick. This weekend, however, is all about the pole. The Pole Dance Festival in St. Paul features three days packed with classes, workshops, vendors, and shows for beginners and pros alike. Friday's highlights include the opening performance and exotic competition, before the full lineup of classes and events—featuring dance, pole sport, and performance workshops—kicks off Saturday. Closing things out on Sunday will be trickster workshops, a fly girl

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22 ►

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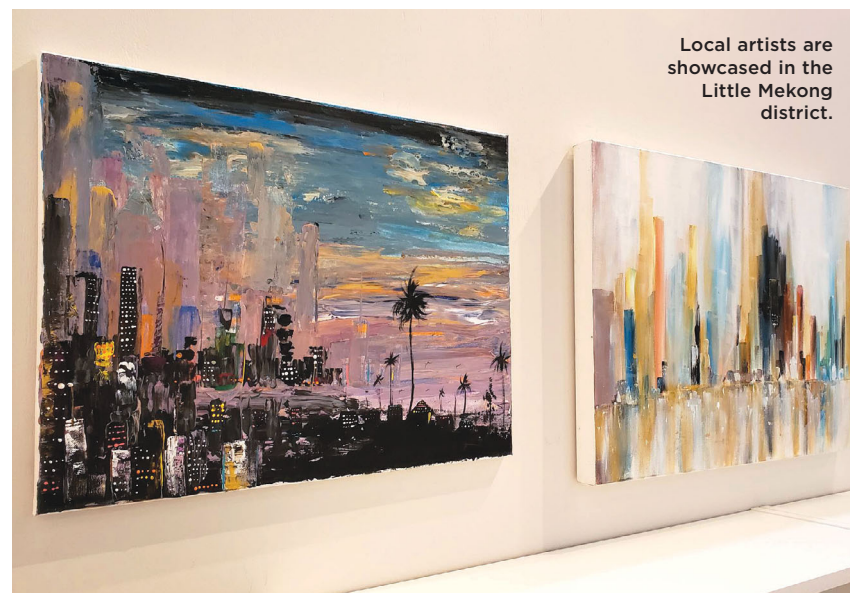
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A-LIST



Local artists are
showcased in the
Little Mekong
district.

COURTESY OF EVENT ORGANIZERS

CONTINUED FROM FRIDAY ►

session, and transcending transitions, sending you into the world with all the tools you need to spin, bend, and express yourself as you get a jumpstart on those 2019 resolutions. Of pole dancing. Many performances and events on the schedule are family-friendly. Registration and more info can be found at poleandperformingart.com. 4 to 11 p.m. Friday; 8:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. Saturday; workshop-only Sunday runs from 9 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. \$15-\$45 daily; \$5-\$20 kids; \$65 three-day pass. 415 Pascal St. N., St. Paul; 651-641-7544.

Through Sunday —PATRICK STRAIT

FILM

HIGH-RISE MAYHEM

TRYLON CINEMA

Trylon Cinema is serving up an action-packed double feature with High-Rise Mayhem. Indonesian actioner *The Raid: Redemption* (2011) opens the cinematic melee with a spectacularly ill-fated police incursion into a drug kingpin's towering apartment fortress. Trapped in the building and stalked by maniacal henchmen and mercenary residents, the few surviving officers face dangers down every corridor, battling with an assortment of guns, knives, improvised explosives, and, most critically, the bone-splintering maneuvers of Pencak Silat (an Indonesian martial art). Following a remarkably similar set-up, the science-fiction action of *Dredd* (2012) captures the fraught brutality of its cult comic source material, *Judge Dredd*, while wisely ignoring the campy 1995 Sylvester Stallone adaptation. Here the titular law enforcer and his novice partner pursue another maniacal drug

lord in another high-rise guarded by another crew of crazed baddies. Starring Karl Urban and Olivia Thirlby, *Dredd* features unrelenting action as our heroes ascend 200 floors of mayhem to breach the criminal stronghold. By the end of this frenzied double bill, audiences will be reeling from the adrenaline high of two masterfully constructed models of cinematic action. 7 and 9 p.m. Friday and Saturday; 3 and 5 p.m. Sunday. \$8. 3258 Minnehaha Ave., Minneapolis; 612-424-5468.

Through Sunday —BRAD RICHASON

SATURDAY 1.19

ART/GALLERY

XIAART GRAND OPENING

XIAART

St. Paul is getting a new shop featuring artists, crafters, makers, and designers from southeast Asia. XIAART, which uses a consignment model for promoting local creativity, is housed in the Little Mekong district on University Avenue. For its grand opening event, the shop will be showcasing an assortment of wearable items, such as bow ties made using Hmong designs by XIXO Men's Wear, plus items from Carol's Candles, hand-carved woodwork by Kong Research & Design, watercolor paintings by Moua Thin Productions, and more. During the opening event, Groove DogZ will be on hand with gourmet hot dogs. Come celebrate this rich array of artisans and artists, and take home something special. 3 to 10 p.m. Asian Economic Development Association, 422 University Ave. W., Ste. 14, St. Paul; 651-222-7798. —SHEILA REGAN

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Artwork: Ta-Coumba Aiken, *Mother Spirit* (detail), 1996.
Coll. Minnesota Museum of American Art.

SUNDAY

SPORTS

INTERNATIONAL SKI JUMPING COMPETITION 2019

BUSH LAKE SKI JUMPS

There are only a few things worth going outside for in this shitty weather, and one of those things is seeing sick ski jumps. If you can drag yourself out from under your weighted blanket for a few hours, your seasonal depression will be instantly cured (or at least put on pause) by International Nordic Ski Jumping. It's like a mini-Olympics taking place at the Bush Lake Ski Jumps, as elite ski jumpers from Europe, Canada, and the U.S. will be going head-to-head for moderately sized trophies and big cash prizes. Come see people soar 300 feet in the air while you relax from the stable ground below, or from the climate-controlled chalet. The \$10 it costs to get in is only slightly more expensive than an Amazon Prime rental of *Better Off Dead*. 4 to 7 p.m. \$10; plus \$20 per vehicle. 8401 E. Bush Lake Rd., Bloomington; 952-484-8956. —PATRICK STRAIT



JERRY HOLT

BARHOPPING/FESTIVAL SOUR BEER CAVE FEST

CASANOVA LIQUORS

If there's one thing that's consistent about the beer scene, it's a constant focus on innovation with an acknowledgement of our Midwestern history. This year's Cave Fest at Casanova Liquors in Hudson highlights that. Take a little road trip to the historic Casanova Caves just east of the St. Croix River, and sample from a curated selection of cellared sour beers. The three-hour event will offer tastes of more than 75 sour and wild-fermented beers, plus there will be live music and appetizers to help keep some sense of sobriety among the revelry. This event is held sporadically; today's will be the third the space has hosted in the past six years. Act now. Who knows when you'll have your next opportunity to drink in a Wisconsin cave. 1 to 4 p.m. \$50. 236 Coulee Rd., Hudson, WI; 715-386-2545. —LOREN GREEN

SUNDAY 1.20

MARKET

NIGHTMARE AFTER THE HOLIDAYS: A MAKER'S FAIR

HAUNTED BASEMENT

The gift-giving holidays have come and gone, which means the twee shopping season is finished—for now. This Sunday's pop-up honors the end of this time with a weird-ass makers' fair where you'll be sure to find some genuinely strange and fabulous stuff.

There will be medical oddities from Walker Friend, tooth-adorned pieces from Sick Kitty Ceramics, sparkly pop-culture inspired pins from Cherry Moon Press, zines from Scream Queens, and dolls (nothing good ever comes from creepy-looking dolls). Stacey R. Britt (@CraftyBitchWithBlackLips) makes delightfully geeky felt creatures resembling Super Mario mushrooms, *Harry Potter* symbols, and unicorns, and participating artists include Strangely Rabid Arts and Crafts, Matt Baehr, and Ferraya. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Free. 2010 E. Hennepin Ave., building #9, Minneapolis. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

TUESDAY 1.22

BARHOPPING

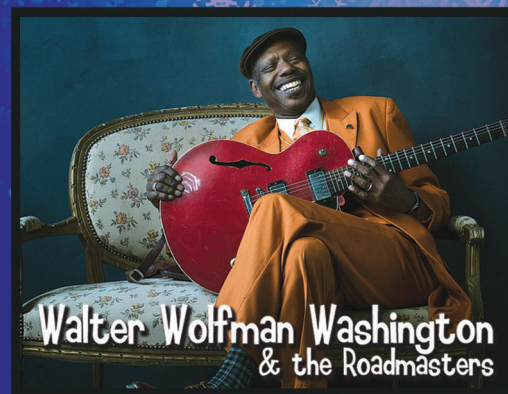
COEN BROTHERS MOVIE TRIVIA

MOON PALACE BOOKS

Sure, you might be able to recite the best quotes from *The Big Lebowski* and know who showed up on what season of *Fargo* on FX. But how much do you know about *Blood Simple*, *The Hudsucker Proxy*, or *Burn After Reading*? Now's the time to test your true Coen brothers mettle at this night hosted by If I Only Had a Brain Trivia. This will be a monthly happening, with the series kicking off at Moon Palace with a tribute to all things Coen. Beer and pizza will be available at Geek Love Cafe. 5 to 9 p.m. Free. 3032 Minnehaha Ave., Minneapolis; 612-454-0455. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

WINTER BLUES FEST

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FILM

ANOTHER FINE MESS

Stan & Ollie looks behind the scenes at Laurel and Hardy



PHOTO BY NICK WALL, COURTESY OF SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

BY TONY LIBERA

For a movie about two comedic legends, *Stan & Ollie* is a sad affair.

Far removed from their Hollywood salad days, Stan Laurel (Steve Coogan) and Oliver Hardy (John C. Reilly) find themselves over the hill, broken down by respective vices, replaced by the new model (in this case, Abbott and Costello), and poorer for it. The slapstick duo decide to embark on a U.K. stage tour, with a shot at a new movie deal promised down the line. However, they soon find, like many other golden age actors, that happy endings are just for the movies.

Stan & Ollie does in some ways play out like your typical Oscar-bait biopic, which is only really a problem if you hate that sort of movie. And while the tailored Academy feel—the revealing period-piece vibe—is undoubtedly present, there’s enough divergence from its familiarities to skirt being run-of-the-mill.

Screenwriter Jeff Pope wisely opts out of a sprawling, front-to-back biog-

raphy and instead limits the story, for the most part, to the comedians’ 1953 tour and their tenuous relationship at that time. You could see another take on Laurel and Hardy coming to life as a decades-spanning rise-and-fall narrative, but here we’re focused on aftermath, streamlined to a 1:37 runtime, and made to question the value of glory when we only see it faded.

As with many biopics, the filmmakers take some liberties with time and reality. Pope and director Jon S. Baird amalgamate what was in actuality a few different Euro tours and shift the timing of the duo’s movie deal—a comedic take on *Robin Hood*—to pack a harder punch. If you’re not a stickler for accuracy, this won’t be much of an issue, and *Stan & Ollie* as a drama is much sadder, if not wholly better, for it.

If there’s concern, so far removed from old Hollywood, that those who don’t know the act won’t get *Stan & Ollie*, know that you don’t have to be a Laurel and Hardy superfan to appreciate this movie. Yes, Coogan and Reilly’s performances are

STAN & OLLIE

directed by Jon S. Baird
starts Friday, Uptown Theatre

certainly more impressive if you have some familiarity with the subjects’ idiosyncrasies and famous routines, but the movie is so rooted in the chemistry and subtle antagonism between the two leads that classic-film knowledge is more of a bonus than a necessity. Coogan’s performance is uncanny, mimicking Laurel’s doofy facial expressions and vaudeville maneuvers with almost eerie skill, while Reilly disappears beneath a fat suit and beams tenderness throughout.

And yet every laugh is ultimately met with an unsettling sense of melancholy. Much more a drama than comedy, *Stan & Ollie* is an examination of failure and friendship, offering as a final thesis, simply, that it was fun while it lasted. That may have been enough for Oliver Hardy, but it’s hard not to be at least a little depressed for the pair. It’s harder still to shake that bittersweet taste after the movie ends. **C+**

THE CHILDREN

A trio grapples with post-apocalypse fallout



DAN NORMAN

BY JAY GABLER

Although *The Children* is a new play with sharp relevance to our present moment, there's no talk of blowhard authoritarians. The only computer that appears onstage isn't used to either spread or combat fake news: Rose (Laila Robins) cracks her laptop to play a vintage R&B jam for an impromptu line dance that provides a poignant moment of joy in this desperately sad encounter.

The setting is established by a miniature landscape suspended in front of a scrim as the audience enters the Jungle Theater: a lonely house on a rocky landscape. When the scrim lifts and the house flies away, we find ourselves inside. Rose stands in the kitchen (realized in absorbing detail by set designer Chelsea M. Warren), bleeding from her nose.

The cause of the nosebleed, we learn, was an instinctive reaction by the surprised owner of the house, Hazel (Linda Kelsey). She and her husband, Robin (Stephen Yoakam), have retreated to the property after their other house was flooded by a natural disaster that also caused a meltdown at the nuclear reactor where, years ago, all three of the sixtysomething characters worked together as engineers.

The events that unfold in Lucy Kirkwood's 2016 play, presented here in the first U.S. production outside of its acclaimed Broadway run, cover familiar territory with a wry, existential twist. The setting has an end-of-the-world quality, but the characters aren't surviving an apocalypse, just an acute reminder of their own mortality, and

THE CHILDREN

Jungle Theater
2951 Lyndale Ave. S., Minneapolis
612-822-7063; through February 10

our planet's. What doesn't kill you makes you stronger, except when it's radiation.

Or aging. Rose, Hazel, and Robin aren't getting any younger, and they have regrets. Some of them involve each other: Robin and Rose, we surmise early on, have a history. That creates a love triangle that Kirkwood uses in a sort of dramaturgical sleight-of-hand. While we're following the romantic revelations, we're also learning more about the nature of the nuclear crisis, and the about larger issues at stake as the characters face an unexpected moral challenge.

Director Casey Stangl and her superb cast maintain complete command of this material's tragicomic tone, bringing a Bergmanesque gravity to Kirkwood's meditation on the fragility of life. The play's title refers to unseen offspring, but it could also describe these mature adults who once were children themselves. All three actors are masterful in this perfectly honed ensemble piece.

The play's emotional punch is so slow-building that you may not fully feel it until hours after the play. While accessible and engaging, with creative flourishes of stagecraft, *The Children* doesn't go for easy catharsis. The end of times may or may not be upon us, but the end will one day come for all of us, whether through ecological disaster or something more mundane.

In a quiet line that seems to encompass a world of lifetimes, Hazel admits with unnecessary shame, "I don't know how to want less." ☐

"STEVE COOGAN AND JOHN C. REILLY DELIVER DYNAMITE PERFORMANCES."
-Jason Zinoman, THE NEW YORK TIMES

STAN & OLLIE

PRODUCED BY FAYE WARD WRITTEN BY JEFF POPE DIRECTED BY JON S. BAIRD

PG

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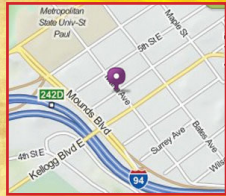
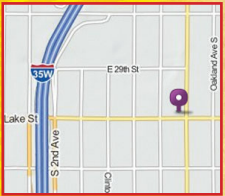
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36, WORKS AT UNITED HEALTH GROUP

What are you wearing?

Zara jacket and shirt, Armani jeans, Steve Madden shoes.

Describe your style:

Modern and European.

Favorite item in your wardrobe?

Sport coat from Hugo Boss.

What's your New Year's style resolution?

Trying to get out of my comfort zone.



HOLLY FALK

30, VINTAGE SELLER AND CO-OWNER OF PARTAGER VINTAGE

What are you wearing?

Vintage coat and pants, Converse shoes, vintage Malo sweater, & Other Stories beanie.

Describe your style:

Cashmere is best when slept in.

Favorite item in your wardrobe?

My faux fur jacket, my Comme des Garçons sneakers, my leather pants, and my gold hoops.

What's your New Year's style resolution?

More leather pants... for everyone.



RAY CORRADI

28, ARTIST

What are you wearing?

Sven clogs, tie-dye socks, Hemlock leather bag, everything else thrifted.

Describe your style:

Thrifted, textured, colorful, movement-focused. I dress for comfort to create an everyday uniform to work, play, and chill in.

Current style crush?

Sara Tonko.

Favorite item in your wardrobe?

I'm obsessed with oversized items and anything gingham.

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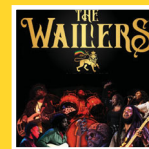
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FRI, FEB 1



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SAT, FEB 9



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and **DARE FORCE**
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MARCH 16.....**QUEENSRÛCHE**
with guest **FATES WARNING**
MARCH 23..**BLACKBERRY SMOKE** Break it
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MARCH 30.....**TOMMY CASTRO**
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JOHN SWARDSON, RYAN HOLWEGGER, JOE KOPEL *10PM
SAT JAN 19TH
AMANDA STRANDALONE, KING FISH CROW
JETTICK, SUPERMODIFIED, BAD IDEA *10PM
SUN JAN 20TH
MUMBLIN' DREW w/ LUKE CALLEN *10PM
IKE'S ALMOST OPEN MIC
MON JAN 21ST
DELTA PHONIC (NEW ORLEANS) *10PM
SKARAOKE w/ JADZIA
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Matinee
Saturday, Jan. 19 || 1 pm
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ELESIN ALEKSANDR

GREAT DATA LIVES HERE

A U of M librarian attempted to compile 89.3 the Current's most-played artists, songs since 2009

BY JAY BOLLER

Shane Nackerud needed to know: Does 89.3 the Current play the Replacements every day?

That thought gripped Nackerud, a data/tech librarian with the University of Minnesota, over Christmas break. Determined to discover exactly how often the St. Paul radio station plays the Minneapolis alt-rock faves, he set out on a data-mining quest. Eventually, Nackerud scratched that initial itch—yes, the Current plays the 'Mats almost every day—though his fleeting curiosity would snowball into an “obsession to get everything.”

Well, at least everything since 2009. That's when the Current, which was launched by Minnesota Public Radio in 2005, activated @currentplaylist, a Twitter account that tweets out every song the station plays in real time.

Armed with a third-party app called Twint, Nackerud was able to extract data from all 1.1 million @currentplaylist tweets from 2009 through last December. He funneled the resulting artist and song info into sprawling spreadsheets, and, ultimately, provided play-count ranking,

all to delight of local music and data geeks.

The top two artists didn't prove all that surprising: Prince (6,900 plays) and David Bowie (6,132).

“If you ask anyone who the No. 1 played artist on the Current is, they would probably guess Prince,” Nackerud says. “And with the deaths of Prince and David Bowie in 2016, the Current has spent entire days playing their songs.”

The most-played song is also by a Minnesota artist, but not one you'd expect. “Not the Kid,” a wistful, chug-a-lugging 2010 track from local indie rockers Communist Daughter, claimed the top spot with 541 spins. “Home” by Edward Sharpe and the Magnetic Zeros (533) and “Bloodbuzz Ohio” by the National (532) charted next.

The top 10 artists are overwhelmingly white, male, and indie rock-aligned, as are the ones who produced the top 10 tracks. In fact, between the two lists, only Icelandic folk-pop band Of Monsters and Men (No. 6 song, “Little Talks”) features a woman on the mic; the first woman-led artist doesn't emerge until No. 12 with U.K. rock band Florence + the Machine.

Minnesota acts are well-represented.

Nackerud notes that he was pleased to see four locals among the top 20 artists—Prince, Atmosphere, the Replacements, and Bob Dylan—and “surprised and very happy” to see St. Paul's Communist Daughter snatch the top song.

“You would think it would be a bigger-name artist” he says. “I think it demonstrates the Current's commitment to independent, Minnesota artists; they help local bands find an audience.”

Communist Daughter frontman Johnny Solomon is feeling the love.

“It's not easy to define success as a musician,” he tweeted last week, referencing Nackerud's work. “But this feels pretty good for that guy who wrote a song he didn't think anyone would hear.”

Curiously, only two of the top 10 artists have performed at the Current/Walker Art Center's annual Rock the Garden music festival: No. 3 Wilco in 2003 and No. 4 Spoon in 2014; JD McPherson, the man behind No. 10 overall song “North Side Gal,” performed in 2015.

Nackerud is quick to point out that his passion project is “for entertainment purposes only.” The data may not be perfect, he acknowledges, due to Twitter outages, potential extraction glitches, and several other factors that may have contributed to a slightly distorted picture of what has hit the Current's airwaves over the past nine years.

Diving into the numbers is certainly entertaining. How else would we know the Current has played Lucy Michelle and the Velvet Lapelles a total of 623 times? Or that “When the Tequila Runs Out” by Dawes notched 204 plays? Or that, at just a hair under 3,000 appearances each, Poliça and Foo Fighters are equally popular in the Current's universe? Or that the Muppet Barbershop Quartet, famous for their cover of Nirvana's “Smells Like Teen Spirit,” has delighted Current listeners a grand total of four times?

And, of course, Nackerud was able to answer the question that sparked this entire adventure: With 3,845 plays since early '09, the No. 17 overall Replacements averaged a bit more than one play per day.

Nackerud has made Google spreadsheets of the airplay stats publicly available. For the number-crunching music fan from St. Louis Park, providing listeners a data pool to splash around in was the whole point.

“I did the best I could and I had a lot of fun doing it,” Nackerud says. “I encourage people to play with the data themselves.”

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MUSIC CRITICS' PICKS

TOP ARTISTS SINCE 2009

- 1 Prince: 6,900
- 2 David Bowie: 6,132
- 3 Wilco: 5,524
- 4 Spoon: 5,271
- 5 Arcade Fire: 5,252
- 6 Beck: 5,145
- 7 The Black Keys: 5,066
- 8 Radiohead: 4,970
- 9 Atmosphere: 4,552
- 10 R.E.M.: 4,291

TOP SONGS SINCE 2009

- 1 "Not the Kid" by Communist Daughter: 541
- 2 "Home" by Edward Sharpe and the Magnetic Zeros: 533
- 3 "Bloodbuzz Ohio" by the National: 532
- 4 "Ho Hey" by the Lumineers: 526
- 5 "Pumped up Kicks" by Foster the People: 501
- 6 "Little Talks" by Of Monsters and Men: 492
- 7 "How You Like Me Now?" by the Heavy: 489
- 8 "My Girls" by Animal Collective: 488
- 9 "Dance Yrself Clean" by LCD Soundsystem: 484
- 10 "North Side Gal" by JD McPherson: 476

CRITICS' PICKS

JULIAN LAGE TRIO

TURF CLUB, FRIDAY 1.18

Former child prodigy guitarist Julian Lage made his mark as an acoustic virtuoso focused on breezy, richly melodic jazz. Subtle folk, bluegrass, and pop grew into streaky eclecticism as the now 31-year-old Lage matured. Switching to electric guitar, Lage formed a formidable trio with double bassist Scott Colley and drummer Kenny Wollesen. In 2016 they issued *Arclight*, focused on pre-bop jazz. The all-originals follow-up, *Modern Lore*, adopts the groove-oriented sound of early, country-inflected rock 'n' roll, Lage's Fender Telecaster etching that spirit but in an abstracted jazz context. 21+. \$17-\$20. 8 p.m. 1601 University Ave., St. Paul; 651-647-0486. —RICK MASON

DUA SALEH

7TH ST. ENTRY, TUESDAY 1.22

Singer, poet, and actor Dua Saleh became one of the Twin Cities' most exciting and refreshing new artists off the strength of a mere few solo songs and collaborations, earning a fifth-place finish in City Pages' 2018 Picked to Click poll along the way. Now Saleh is finally out with debut EP *Nur*, produced by thestand4rd mastermind Psymun. Its mysterious but soulful experimentalism is a mesmerizing combination that somehow feels both ancient and futuristic. With Kamilla Love, Booboo, and R.A.D. 18+. 7 p.m. \$10/\$12. 701 First Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-338-8388. —MICHAEL MADDEN

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♈ ARIES (March 21-April 19): In 1917, leaders of the Christian sect Jehovah's Witnesses prophesied that all earthly governments would soon disappear and Christianity would perish. In 1924, they predicted that the ancient Hebrew prophet Moses would be resurrected and speak to people everywhere over the radio. In 1938, they advised their followers not to get married or have children, because the end of civilization was nigh. In 1974, they said there was only a "short time remaining before the wicked world's end." I bring these failed predictions to your attention, Aries, so as to get you in the mood for my prediction, which is: All prophecies that have been made about your life up until now are as wrong as the Jehovah Witnesses' visions. In 2019, your life will be bracingly free of old ideas about who you are and who you're supposed to be. You will have unprecedented opportunities to prove that your future is wide open.

♉ TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Movie critic Roger Ebert defined the term "diot plot" as "any film plot containing problems that would be solved instantly if all of the characters were not idiots." I bring this to your attention because I suspect there has been a storyline affecting you that in some ways fits that description. Fortunately, any temptation you might have had to go along with the delusions of other people will soon fade. I expect that as a result, you will catalyze a surge of creative problem-solving. The diot plot will transform into a much smarter plot.

♊ GEMINI (May 21-June 20): In 1865, Prussia's political leader, Otto von Bismarck, got angry when an adversary, Rudolf Virchow, suggested cuts to the proposed military budget. Bismarck challenged Virchow to a duel. Virchow didn't want to fight, so he came up with a clever plan. As the challenged party, he was authorized to choose the weapons to be used in the duel. He decided upon two sausages. His sausage would be cooked; Bismarck's sausage would be crammed with parasitic roundworms. It was a brilliant stratagem. The proposition spooked Bismarck, who backed down from the duel. Keep this story in mind if you're challenged to an argument, dispute, or conflict in the coming days. It's best to figure out a tricky or amusing way to avoid it altogether.

♋ CANCER (June 21-July 22): An imaginative 27-year-old man with the pseudonym Thewildandcrazyvill decided he was getting too old to keep his imaginary friend in his life. So he took out an ad on Ebay, offering to sell that long-time invisible ally, whose name was John Mallipman. Soon his old buddy was dispatched to the highest bidder for \$3,000. Please don't attempt anything like that in the coming weeks, Cancerian. You need more friends, not fewer—both of the imaginary and non-imaginary variety. Now is a ripe time to expand your network of compatriots.

♌ LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): In December 1981, novice Leo filmmaker James Cameron got sick, fell asleep, and had a disturbing dream. He saw a truncated robot armed with kitchen knives crawling away from an explosion. This nightmare ultimately turned out to be a godsend for Cameron. It inspired him to write the script for the 1984 film *The Terminator*, a successful creation that launched him on the road to fame and fortune. I'm expecting a comparable development in your near future, Leo. An initially weird or difficult event will actually be a stroke of luck.

♍ VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Psychologists define the Spotlight Effect as our tendency to imagine that other people are acutely attuned to every little nuance of our behavior and appearance. The truth is that they're not, of course. Most everyone is primarily occupied with the welter of thoughts buzzing around inside his or her own head. The good news, Virgo, is that you are well set up to capitalize on this phenomenon in the coming weeks. I'm betting you will achieve a dramatic new liberation: You'll be freer than ever before from the power of people's opinions to inhibit your behavior or make you self-conscious.

♎ LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): What North America community is farthest north? It's an Alaskan city that used to be called Barrow, named after a British admiral. But in 2016, local residents voted to reinstate the name that the indigenous Inupiat people had once used for the place: Utqiaq vik. In accordance with astrological omens, I propose that in the coming weeks, you take inspiration from their decision, Libra. Return to your roots. Pay homage to your sources. Restore and revive the spirit of your original influences.

♏ SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): The Alaskan town of Talkeetna has a population of 900, so it doesn't require a complicated political structure to manage its needs. Still, it made a bold statement by electing a cat as its mayor for 15 years. Stubbs, a part-manx, won his first campaign as a write-in candidate, and his policies were so benign—no new taxes, no repressive laws—that he kept getting re-elected. What might be the equivalent of having a cat as your supreme leader for a while, Scorpio? From an astrological perspective, now would be a favorable time to implement that arrangement. This phase of your cycle calls for relaxed fun and amused mellowness and laissez-faire jauntiness.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Trees need to be buffeted by the wind. It makes them strong. As they respond to the pressure of breezes and gusts, they generate a harder kind of wood called reaction wood. Without the assistance of the wind's stress, trees' internal structure would be weak and they might topple over as they grew larger. I'm pleased to report that you're due to receive the benefits of a phenomenon that's metaphorically equivalent to a brisk wind. Exult in this brisk but low-stress opportunity to toughen yourself up!

♑ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Writing at ThePudding, pop culture commentator Colin Morris reveals the conclusions he drew after analyzing 15,000 pop songs. First, the lyrics of today's tunes have significantly more repetitiveness than the lyrics of songs in the 1960s. Second, the most popular songs, both then and now, have more repetitive lyrics than the average song. Why? Morris speculates that repetitive songs are catchier. But in accordance with current astrological omens, I encourage you Capricorns to be as unrepentant as possible in the songs you sing, the messages you communicate, the moves you make, and the ideas you articulate. In the coming weeks, put a premium on originality, unpredictability, complexity, and novelty.

♒ AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): In May 1927, Aquarian aviator Charles Lindbergh made a pioneering flight in his one-engine plane from New York to Paris. He became instantly famous. Years later, Lindbergh testified that partway through his epic journey he was visited by a host of odd, vaporous beings who suddenly appeared in his small cabin. They spoke with him, demonstrating a sophisticated understanding of navigation and airplane technology. Lindbergh's spirits were buoyed. His concentration, which had been flagging, revived. He was grateful for their unexpected support. I foresee a comparable kind of assistance becoming available to you sometime soon, Aquarius. Don't waste any time being skeptical about it; just welcome it.

♊ PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): More than four centuries ago, a Piscean samurai named Honda Tadakatsu became a leading general in the Japanese army. In the course of his military career, he fought in more than a hundred battles. Yet he never endured a major wound and was never beaten by another samurai. I propose we make him your inspirational role model for the coming weeks. As you navigate your way through interesting challenges, I believe that like him, you'll lead a charmed life. No wounds. No traumas. Just a whole lot of educational adventures.

CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13
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62			63			64			65					
66						67					68			
69						70					71			

COME FLY WITH ME

BY BRENDAN EMMETT QUIGLEY

Across

- 1 Junior senator Romney
- 5 One who has difficulty picking things up
- 9 67-Across maker
- 14 Geometry homework problem
- 15 Big name in syrup
- 16 Turned out
- 17 1997 Foo Fighters single
- 19 Sneaker part
- 20 Photo in a photo
- 21 Café menu
- 23 Distinguished Indian's title

Down

- 1 First lady before Jackie
- 2 Humor lost on many
- 3 Like sudden-death overtimes
- 4 Hires
- 5 It's got a high overhead
- 6 Clemson Tigers QB Trevor
- 7 Bully who attacks schools?
- 8 Quantum theory scientist Niels
- 9 Take-home number
- 10 U.S. Open number
- 11 Led, as a meeting
- 12 Pick up
- 13 Actor Redmayne
- 18 School where 13-Down attended
- 22 Perfect figure
- 25 Bank's offering
- 27 Scuff up
- 29 Grow bigger
- 30 Duchess of ____ (Goya subject)
- 31 Running Warren
- 32 Cheer for Atletico Madrid, say
- 33 Words after kissing a minor boo-boo
- 35 Rice-like pasta

- 37 Minor problem
- 38 “ ____ Colour You Like” (Pink Floyd)
- 40 Flight rail
- 41 Gobblegook mishmash
- 44 Name
- 46 Heavenly
- 48 Quaint stopover
- 50 It's all around you
- 51 Like actors who would be happy to work
- 52 Reached, as a total
- 53 Its enharmonic equivalent is B major
- 54 ____ Hufflepuff (one of the co-founders of Hogwarts)
- 55 Employ against
- 56 Kind of culture dish
- 59 Devoted
- 60 Bank's action
- 63 Squeeze out
- 65 Groups of rioters

Last Week's Answer

I	M	E	S	S	A	G	E		L	O	R	D	J	I	M
P	R	A	I	S	E	S		I	B	E	R	I	A		
R	O	B	B	I	N	S		B	E	C	A	L	M		
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V	E	R	E		A	Y	E	S		N	A	B	S		
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Small Talk

What if my boyfriend's kink is damaging to his mental health?

I'm a middle-aged man dating a younger guy. He wanted to be a "boy" to a Dom top daddy, and I was happy to oblige. The sex is amazing, and we click as people, too. Then a couple days ago, he told me he wanted to explore small penis humiliation (SPH). I was taken aback—not by the request, but because his penis is NOT small! It's not huge, but it's at least average. When I pointed this out, he claimed I was just trying to make him feel better about his small size! He said I was patronizing him. He ended the conversation by saying he would drop it, since it was obviously making me uncomfortable. Honestly, I am uncomfortable with it. I just can't imagine bringing myself to go on about how small his dick is when I'm actually thinking how much that thing would hurt if he were to top me. But my bigger concern is that doing SPH might feed into possible body dysmorphia. The way he reacted to being told his penis wasn't small was a red flag—it told me this isn't just a fantasy. It's not that he wants to be made to FEEL it's small; he really believes it is small. How is this different from telling a skinny boyfriend what a big fat pig he is? I want to be GGG, but not at the cost of his mental health.

NEED OBJECTIVITY, SAVAGE, PLEASE HELP!

"The boy expressed a desire to play out a specific scene; he did not request a fact-check on his dick size," said Dr. Reece Malone, a board-certified sex therapist with a doctorate in human sexuality. "The boy's disappointment is understandable, especially if he was feeling hopeful that the request would be met with enthusiasm and mutual excitement."

Your boy was probably nervous when he brought SPH up, NOSPH, and his reaction to your reaction—his complaints about feeling patronized, his demand to drop the subject—was likely motivated by shame. Not shame about the size of his dick, but shame about this particular kink. He was open with you about other kinks right away, but sharing those kinks

probably didn't make him feel as vulnerable as sharing this one did. And after he worked up the nerve to tell you about his biggest turn-on, your response was to argue with him about whether his dick is small enough to qualify him for SPH play. "I think it's important that NOSPH revisit the conversation to examine if his reaction felt shaming," said Malone.

"While I appreciate NOSPH's concerns," continued Malone, "SPH scenes don't require one to have a small dick. It's fully engaging in the role-play itself that's hot and exciting. It really is no different if a daddy's skinny boyfriend wanted to engage in a fantasy where the thought of being a 'big fat pig' was hot and exciting for him."

Your boyfriend may have a distorted idea about average dick

size—most likely distorted by porn—but odds are good he's one of millions of people out there who have eroticized their anxieties and insecurities. So long as he isn't contemplating some dangerous or stupid way to make his cock bigger (like getting liquid silicone injected into his genitals, something that led to the death of a gay man in Seattle last year), you can engage in SPH without doing him harm.

"But it's also fair for NOSPH to share his own concerns about feeding into body dysmorphia," said Malone. "He also has the right to set boundaries or decline the scene altogether."

Agreed! If you can't go there, you aren't obligated to go there. But it might make you feel better about going there if you bear in mind that you can mock his tiny cock (during sex play) and reassure him about his cock (during aftercare). If your boy doesn't feel like he has to win an argument about how small his cock is to get the SPH he wants, he might be willing to admit—or finally be willing to accept—that his cock isn't really that small.

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Dan Savage

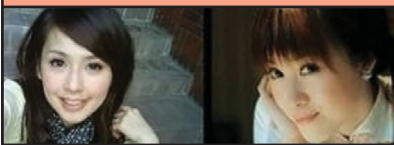
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